

NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
318 South Sixth Street
Springfield, IL 62701
Tel: 217/492-4450

RODGER A. HEATON
U.S. ATTORNEY
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS



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Contact: Eugene L. Miller
Assistant U.S. Attorney
(217) 373-5875

Eastern Illinois University Student Pleads Guilty to Mail Fraud and Aggravated Identity Theft

Urbana, IL— An Eastern Illinois University student has admitted to using others' identities to defraud buyers in an online auction fraud scheme, as announced by Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois. On Friday, January 6, 2006, U.S. Magistrate Judge David G. Bernthal accepted the guilty pleas of Adewuyi "Eddie" Arojojoye, a 21-year-old student residing at 2500 Nantucket Street, Apt. 507, in Charleston, Illinois. Arojojoye is originally from Dolton, Illinois, a southern Chicago suburb.

In making his guilty pleas, Arojojoye did not admit to a specific loss amount as a result of the fraud scheme; however, the indictment alleged Arojojoye defrauded more than 25 victims of more than \$20,000 from April 2004 to May 2005. Arojojoye pled guilty to five counts of mail fraud and three counts of aggravated identity theft.

According to court records, Arojojoye admitted setting up accounts with online auction services, such as E-bay, using names and credit card numbers of persons without their authorization. He advertised items, such as cellular telephones, for sale through the online auction services even though he did not possess the items. He then contacted the winners of the auctions and requested payment in the form of U.S. postal money orders be sent to him using one of his aliases to a vacant or non-existent address in Charleston, Illinois.

Arojojoye admitted using a number of aliases, including "Michael Cookes," "Timothy Anderson," and "Donald Webb," to falsely identify himself at the U.S. Post Office or to the mail carrier and take receipt of the envelope containing the money order. He then cashed it or sent it to others to be cashed.

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Arojoye never provided the victims with the items they had paid for, and after receiving the money, canceled or changed his E-bay account and used a new alias to avoid detection and continue his scheme.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Eugene L. Miller.

Arojoye's sentencing is scheduled for April 5, 2006, at 2:30 p.m. before Chief U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey in Urbana, Illinois. Arojoye remains free on conditions of bond pending sentencing.

At sentencing, each count of mail fraud carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. For aggravated identity theft, using another's identity to commit a federal felony, the defendant faces a mandatory sentence of two years imprisonment which must be served consecutive to any sentence for the underlying offense, in this case, mail fraud, and a \$250,000 fine. Arojoye will also be required to make full restitution to the victims of his offenses, pay a \$800 special assessment, and be placed on up to five years of supervised release after his release from prison.

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